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primitive methods of cultivation changed in the near future. The establishment of a manure depot was a step calculated to help the realisation of the above object. He added that at present artificial manure was not available at all times in sufficient quantities, not to speak of the very high prices which had to be paid for it.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

V.—Public Works.

84. Some suggestions to check the wasteful expenditure of the Public Works Department.

Mr. Krishnan Madhavan (Member, Karunagappalli taluk) observed that the expenditure under 'salaries and establishment charges' in the Public Works Department had considerably risen since the reorganisation of the department, *viz.*, from 16 per cent to 19 per cent of the total expenditure, and that it bore no comparison with that in the neighbouring State of Cochin where the percentage was only 13. In his opinion, the following reduction in the staff of the department was possible and should be made.

(1) There was no necessity for a Deputy Chief Engineer on a monthly salary of Rs. 900, as his work could be conveniently attended to by the Executive Engineer in charge of the Trivandrum Division.

(2) For 6 Divisions, there were at present 8 Executive Engineers. Even reserving one for possible contingencies, such as leave, it should be quite possible to reduce the number to 7. As one officer in the grade was now on leave preparatory to retirement, he suggested that the vacancy might be absorbed when it occurred.

(3) A staff of 15 Assistant Engineers and 3 Sub-Engineers was far too much for 11 Sub-Divisions. On being told by the Dewan that there were really 16 Sub-Divisions, the Member said that the excess number after allowing one Assistant Engineer for each Sub-Division might be reduced. He added that, if it be ruled that at least the qualified among the Supervisors, who now numbered 10, could hold charge of Sub-Divisions, a further reduction in the number of Assistant Engineers would be possible.

(4) 10 Supervisors and 44 Overseers to hold charge of Sections was inordinately high. Even restricting the charge of Sections to Supervisors or Overseers, as was now insisted on, the number of Overseers could be brought down to what it was before the reorganisation, *viz.*, 33.

The Member thought that the analogy of British India in fixing the staff could not hold good, as there the jurisdiction of the officers was wider and the number of concentrated works much more than here. Examining the budget of expenditure of the department for 1088, he said that the really important works, *viz.*, construction of buildings, were only to the extent of 6 lakhs of rupees and, to spend that amount, a costly staff such as existed at present was unnecessary.

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The Member next objected to the entertainment of European Assistant Engineers on a starting pay of Rs. 300, while the sanctioned pay was only Rs. 250—$\frac{50}{3}$—400, and while the native officers with better qualifications were always started on the minimum salary. European officers were also being appointed as Assistant Engineers when qualified natives of the State were available. In the opinion of the Member, the policy pursued created a feeling of discontent among the subjects of the State.

Dewan.—The Government have distinctly ruled that only Bachelors of Civil Engineering of a recognised University shall be appointed to the grade of Assistant Engineers. There is another G. O. which says that, in regard to *any* appointment, when a Travancorean is forthcoming, he shall be preferred to a non-Travancorean. In the Public Works Department, in every case in which a Travancorean satisfied these conditions, he has been appointed, and if any one was passed over, it must have been on the ground that he was not a Graduate in Engineering of a recognised University. The Government are not prepared to sacrifice efficiency for the sake of a Travancorean. In the Judicial and Medical Departments, for instance, duly qualified natives of the State are largely available, and they are being preferred. Unfortunately, in the Public Works Department, a sufficient number of qualified natives of the State is not available. The proper thing for the natives would therefore be to take up that line and pass the requisite tests.

The Member then made the following suggestions :—

(1) In the matter of Public Works contracts, they should be given to the natives, if they be available. At present, such contracts were being given to outsiders, at rates much higher than those offered by the natives, on the alleged ground that the natives would not be able to satisfactorily carry out the contracts. But the fact remained that all those works were really done by the natives to whom the outsiders sub-let the contracts. He cited the Kodayar works as an instance in point. He suggested that local boards be constituted as in British India and small public works got done through their agency.

(2) The amount spent on maintenance works was now a waste, as the works were, in most cases, not done at all, though they were being duly charged for. As instances, he mentioned the following in the Shertallai taluk :—

(*a*) Maintenance of the Nanattukara Road. No such road existed.

(*b*) Road from the public road to Vettakaramuttu. That road also did not really exist.

(*c*) Maintenance of 9 miles of road from Ezhupunnakayal to Manakodamkayal. The road was only 2 miles long.

(*d*) Road from Thonnakalkavu to Kuthiathode. 4 miles were charged for, while the road existed only for half a mile.

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He said that, so far as Central and North Travancore were concerned, the maintenance of village roads might be stopped altogether, and the funds thereby saved sanctioned periodically and utilised in thoroughly doing up those roads.

(3) The preparation of revised and supplemental estimates became an ordinary occurrence in the case of every work. He suggested the desirability of insisting on the original estimates being *carefully* prepared, so as to dispense with the supplemental estimates as far as possible.

(4) He then mentioned the instances of the flood-gate over the Arthutty canal, the channel taking off the water of the Vaikom temple tank to the backwater, and the Thottapalli lock, as being works done by the Public Works Department without the request of the people, and he added that they had all turned out to be useless works. He strongly urged the necessity for consulting local conditions before such works were undertaken.

(5) In sanctioning the budget of expenditure, fuller details of the roads to be maintained should be shown. The lengths of the roads, from what mile to what mile, &c. were informations not given in the detailed list of roads now published.

(6) There was no professional officer in the Huzur to scrutinise the Public Works Budget and estimates. It would be a great advantage to have one such officer in the Secretariat.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

65. The necessity for providing more roads and tanks, in the interests of agriculture, in South Travancore.

Mr. D. C. Joseph (Member, Nominated) said that the results of the irrigation scheme in South Travancore were by no means commensurate with the outlay and the expectations of the people and yet they had a mania for converting all garden lands within the area commanded by the Kodayar Project into wet lands. The Member feared that the conversion of dry lands into wet, at the present rate, would turn out to be a great failure, unless the Government most assiduously safeguarded the interests of the people by providing several facilities, the most important of which was the opening of roads wherever extensive tracts of land were brought under wet cultivation. He referred with gratification to the fact that the Public Works authorities were now taking steps to open all the necessary roads in the lands commanded by the Erattakara Kal and the Thovala Channel, the two blocks where such roads were most needed.

The Member next said that the experience of the ryots went to show that the paddy lands attached to irrigation tanks were in a more advantageous position than those watered directly from the channels. With the opening of the Erattakara Kal, the uncertainty as to the adequacy of the water in the Kodayar Reservoir would, if at all, be augmented. At all events he said that it was very necessary that all the existing irrigation tanks should be retained and filled with water from the Reservoir whenever possible. He also suggested that new tanks should be provided in the large areas to

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